A SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING

AT

KENSINGTON,

SUNDAY, Jan. 20. 1695.

By *GEO. HOOPER*, Dean of *Canterbury*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Publish'd by His Majesty's Command.

LONDON,

Printed by *Tho. Warren*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, MDCXCV.

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1 Joh. iii. 20.

If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart ----

THE words of the Text are introduc'd upon the ſubject of Charity and Love to our Brethren, the Argument ſo much recommended through the whole Epiſtle, by the Loving and moſt Belov'd Apoſtle. What occaſion the Diſciples had given for the Diſcourſe, or wherein they had offended, St. *John* in the ſame Spirit of Charity conceals: not expoſing the particulars to common notice; but referring the inquiry to their

private thoughts, and leaving the profecution to their own hearts: adding only this neceſſary intimation, That if upon the examination they found themſelves innocent, they might then appear before God with confidence, aſſur'd of his Favour; but if they were conſcious to themſelves of any Sins they cheriſh'd, they were then to think that the ſame Obſervations were made by the Almighty, and had nothing to expect but his Diſpleaſure. For *if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things.*

Where the Apoſtle we ſee proceeds from a double ſuppoſition: for in the ſame inſinuation, where theſe Chriſtians are Accus'd, it is preſum'd too, that they are not of reprobate profligate Minds; that they have retain'd Sence enough to diſcern their faults, Ingenuity to acknowledge, and Juſtice to condemn them. But why then, infers the Apoſtle, do they not forſake them? and what have they to pretend before their Maker? They ſtand already convict, and pre-condemn'd by themſelves; and what have they to ſay in Arreſt of Judgment? How ſhall they eſcape the Condemnation of God? *If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart*-----

According to the tenor of theſe words, the Diſcourſe which now begs your Patience, is deſign'd, I. *Firſt*,

I. *First*, To consider the *Supposition* of St. *John*; And then,

II. *Secondly*, To reinforce his *Conclusion*.

I. *First*, The *Supposition* consists of *Two* Parts;

First, The *Knowledge* these Christians had of their *Duties*; And,

Secondly, Their *Offence* against it.

What the *Measure* of their *Knowledge* was, and what the *Particulars* of their *Offence*, they themselves were to consider by the Direction of the Apostle: we are neither inform'd about it, nor concern'd. It may be enough for us to take that for granted which we cannot deny; That, in general, *Mankind is so knowing*, as to be *sensible of a Duty*; and *so unhappy*, *as not to perform it*: this may be enough to confess with shame before Men and Angels, with fear and trembling before our GOD.

And *First*, That *Man is born obnoxious to some Duties, and is conscious to himself of several Obligations bound upon him by Nature*; This is a Principle so well known, and universally own'd, that no other of any the most certain Science can pretend to a clearer light: the Notions of Equal and Unequal, Streight and Crooked not being more easie and natural, than those of Just and Unjust, Merit and Demerit;

Demerit: a Truth therefore not to be called in queſtion by the Attempt of a Proof, nor now to be inſiſted on for greater Evidence; but only for the Weight that hangs upon it, and the great Conſequences that attend it.

For what we here ſuppoſe, amounts to no more than this: That as all Animals have peculiar to them a Sence and Perception of what comes within their Sphere, and is neceſſary for the Uſes of their Life; as they diſtinguiſh by Taſte, Smell, and Sight, find ſome things grateful, others ungrateful, receiving their Impreſſions with Pleaſure and Pain; as they have ſuch a Conſciouſneſs, which attends not the Growth of Plants: So in Man, the Being of the next higher Rank, there is a new Senſe, if I may ſo ſpeak, added, a farther Perception given, of what is Juſt and Unjuſt, Decent and Indecent; A Senſe not only of the Congruity or Incongruity of Bodies to Bodies, of an Object to the Organ; but of our Will to our Reaſon, of our Actions to our Rule, of our particular Deſigns to the Deſign of humane Nature: and that ſuch a Senſe as this, like the other outward, to be felt and not expreſſed, is not neither without its Satisfaction or Diſſatisfaction, its Pleaſure or its Pain. That is; As the Eye, beſides the ſerviceable notice it gives us of the Figure and Countenance of Things, their Magnitude

Magnitude and Parvitude, Diſtance and Approach; has in it too a pleaſing Perception of the beauty of Colours, and Symmetry of Proportion: and as the Ear is made to give us an account of the motions and meetings of Bodies, in the Effect or Signification of which we may be concern'd; and has beſides a diſtinctive Notion of the Agreeableneſs or Diſagreeableneſs of Sounds: in like manner, the Reaſonable Part of Man is not only endued with the Faculty of being able to reflect and look back, to view and compare, to foreſee and provide, ſo to conduct our Actions in particular; but has in it too ſome ſence of their Suitableneſs or Unſuitableneſs to the common Intentions of its Being; comprehends the difference of Good and Ill, Beneficence and Inhumanity, Generoſity and Ingratitude, Juſtice and Injuſtice, and is it ſelf thence as differently affected. For as a conſidering Man, after all Philoſophical Attempts to the contrary, cannot but acknowledge an intention and contrivance in the Fabrick of Plants and Animals, in the Nouriſhment and Growth of both, in the Actions and Motions of the laſt, eſpecially thoſe towards the Production and Preſervation of their Young; thoſe brute Creatures conſtantly purſuing the original Intention by an orderly courſe, and well-manag'd conduct; ſeeming to have a deſign of their own, but exe-

cuting that of their Creator: So in us Men, when our reaſon gives us a new Life above that of common Animals, we ſuppoſe it brings along with it new diſpoſitions and higher intentions; ſuch as are thoſe, to live Sociably, to deal Juſtly, to relieve Charitably: to theſe things we Men are orderly prompted, and gently inclin'd, by the frame of our Conſtitution, by I know not what Spring, by ſome thing our Maker has put within us, which we find to be there, but know not how to deſcribe.

Such a Direction there is implanted within us by our Creator: neither matters it much by what Phyſical Method it is wrought, whether it proceeds from Innate Notions already form'd, or from an Original Aptitude in us to form theſe Notions our ſelves. As a Fowl of the Air no leſs Naturally builds its Neſt, whether it ſets on the work from an Idea or Model before trac'd in the imagination, or is ſtirr'd up to it regularly by a Mechanical Impulſe. Whatever Phraſe we will chuſe to uſe, whether Nature has wrote theſe Laws Her ſelf, or Dictates them to be writ by us, the Law and Courſe of Humane Nature is ſtill the ſame: by that we are conſcious to our ſelves we ſhould guide our Actions, and by that we judge them, our *Thoughts Accuſing or Excuſing us.* From that ground there ariſes

ariſes a Complacency and ſatisfaction in what we do well, in our ſelves it is remember'd with Delight, Applauded and Approv'd in others: thence too is our Diſlike of what is ill; it is Unſeemly, Improper, Abſurd, and Odious, always in other Men, and not without difficulty conniv'd at, and diſſembled at home.

For take from Man any concern of his own, ſet him out of the Commerce, and diſengage him from the Intereſt of the World; let him ſtand by but as an Indifferent Spectator; and as he cannot forbear to commend what is Beautiful to the Eye, or Harmonious to the Ear, ſo neither what is apt, and fit and ſuitable to the Mind. He that ſhall be found Regular and Temperate, Juſt and Impartial, Charitable and Beneficent, Contributing to the Good of the Univerſe, Grateful to all, but with a peculiar duty to his Almighty Benefactor; muſt be ſuppos'd to act Rightly and Commendably, according to the Law of his Creation, the Delight and the Admiration of his kind. And he on the contrary that ſhould offend by Intemperance againſt the excellency of his own Nature, or by Injuſtice, Unmercifulneſs or Cruelty againſt the Lives or Fortunes of other Men; muſt be allowed to have acted Wrong, and Diſorderly, unſuitably to the intent of his nature, and deſign of his Ma-

ker; a diſagreeable ſight; unworthy of the Favour of his God, and obnoxious to his Diſpleaſure.

With ſuch a notion of good and ill are the Characters of Men in ſtory tranſmitted and receiv'd, and the Bad cenſur'd often by thoſe that are not Better. So true generally and free is our judgment concerning the actions of others, though perverted or reſtrain'd at our own. But this natural ſence of Good and Ill never ſhows it ſelf more certainly than when we come to ſuffer the Cruelty or Injuſtice our ſelves, then we quickly find a Law of Nature, and underſtand the difference of right and wrong; then we ſpeak it out loudly and ſenſibly; appeal to the World for the unworthineſs and unreaſonableneſs of the action; and expect it ſhould be condemn'd by the reſt of Men.

This is our apprehenſion concerning the Actions of others; and for the moſt part too we fail not to have the ſame ſence of our own. Our Thoughts cannot be brought always to favour us, and Nature will ſpeak its Mind: in its Checks and Diſſents before the fact, in its Regrets and Remorſes after. Or if our youthful Paſſions prevail, give no time to conſider, and hurry on; yet when the fury and heat is over, and we can think; or adverſity put us to a ſtand, and we begin to look back;

back; our ſence of Good and Ill returns to us, and we ſee behind us the crooked Errours of our ways. Then when at a diſtance, and in our temperate thoughts we review our Actions; as an Artiſt examines his Work, or a Writer reviſes his Compoſition, we eaſily eſpy our Faults, come upon them as ſtrangers, and cenſure them with an impartial eye. But if any one has not yet given himſelf this leiſure, always in haſte, or in a perpetual heat; yet a fatal ſtop will come, and a cooler time: then the fumes will be evaporated; and the forced thoughts, we have liv'd with, give place to thoſe of Nature. Man, when he comes to own his Mortality in earneſt, will acknowledge too the other Conditions of his Being: and when he is brought to pay his laſt Debt, confeſs the reſt of his Obligations: going to obey the Will of his God now, and O that he had comply'd before! Think then, ſays *Epicurus*, of the Pleaſures you formerly enjoyed: let him think of them then, if he can, without regret: but it would be happier much to have good Actions to think of; then he might look back with joy, and go on with aſſurance.

Such, certainly, is the ſence of Mankind, generally ſpeaking, upon the firſt opportunities naturally ariſing in us, in our matureſt Age, in our freeſt, ſobereſt and leaſt ſuſpected hours: follow-

Man-

Man into his Retirement and ſee, whether theſe are not the Notions of his undiſturb'd recollected Thoughts: Go to his Death-bed and ask him, ſee what he thinks there; hearken how he counſels his Friends, and directs his Relations.

There is therefore for ſuch a moral ſence of humane Nature, all the moral evidence that can be expected: it admitting not of more Proof, becauſe it needs it not; as we urge not Arguments to evince that Men ſee or hear, and believe it to be true, notwithſtanding what may be pretended by the wittieſt of the blind or the deaf. For in ſuch Subjects as theſe the wonder is not, that Proof cannot be given, but that it ſhould be demanded: it being enough that we have for its Truth, the general Atteſtation of Mankind in all Ages and Places, added to our own private Experience.

Neither is this common Opinon and univerſal Conſent to be imputed to the Policy of Law-givers, the Contrivance of Princes or Prieſts. For ſome Writers of Politicks have favoured the Truth but little; neither has Atheiſm always been made the ſecret it is ſometimes called. The Doctrine of private Profit and Pleaſure is not ſo difficult to comprehend, but that the Commonalty might learn it well; nor has it wanted it Apoſtles ſo, but that it has been very faithfully ſpread, and diligently

gently recommended: It might have been quickly received too, had it been found as true, as it is easie and tempting; could the private Judgment and natural Apprehension of Man have been brought to consent, it would long ago have been the Catholick Doctrine, not continued a Paradox, not given its Abettors the Pleasure of Singularity. Those too that publish these Notions of Vertue and Vice, Punishment and Reward hereafter, give them not Authority, but receive it from them: from the Credit of such Truths it is that we are recommended to the People; who when they hear of these Dictates of Nature, believe only what they feel, and assent to nothing but what they know.

However we are not to expect, that this Supposition should pass without contradiction; for what is that Truth which has not been disputed? This therefore too, we may confess without any derogation to it, has been denied by two sorts of Men:

The *One*, who find this Notion of *Good* and *Ill* working within them, but own it not, esteem it a piece of weakness to confess their fears, and out of false bravery defie and tremble; these argue against themselves, and their words are condemned by their hearts.

The

The *other* may ſeem more Ingenuous, who have made themſelves as inſenſible as they pretend, and are in ſome meaſure to be believ'd for the Ignorance they profeſs: but they ought not then to ſet up for Patterns; to oppoſe their ſingle inſtance againſt the conſpiring teſtimony of all the reſt, and by an Irregularity to ſhape the courſe of Nature.

For when we ſuppoſe a Natural Conſcience in Man, we ſuppoſe too that it may be much Oppreſt, and in ſome few it may be well-nigh Extinguiſht. What was begun in *Adam* may be perfected by his Sons; and the original Bent of our Conſtitution weaken'd at firſt by Him, at laſt wholly deſtroy'd by Us. For theſe Inclinations of our Rational part to Good, move not in us neceſſarily, nor act irreſiſtibly, as thoſe of other Animals: they are accompanied with a freedom of the Will, which ſhould Direct, but may Overrule. For that freedom of Choice given to Man, may check and diveſt our very Natural deſires, may refuſe to eat or drink; ſo eaſily may we imagine the ſame power over the other ſpiritual propenſions: however neither of them, though diſturb'd by Man's Will, are therefore Imaginary; to be Croſs'd and Diſorder'd, but not to be Deny'd. A Mother that ſhall be able, by the unhappy exerciſe of her freedom, to reſtrain her Natural Affection to her Infant, is not therefore

therefore a good Argument againſt that Kind Deſign of Nature: nor ſhall a Man, that has prevail'd upon himſelf to be Unmerciful, Ungrateful, Inſenſible of a God, and Unapprehenſive of the Future; perſwade us therefore that this is Human, or the genuine reſult of his Firſt Conſtitution.

As Man is Lord of himſelf, and enjoys his Liberty, ſo he may uſe it againſt himſelf; and deſtroy what he was intruſted to preſerve: by debauch he may weaken and enervate the tone of his Body, and he may ſoften the Firmneſs of his Mind; he may deform God's Outward Image, and may efface the Characters within: he may put out his Eyes, and cut off his Hands or his Feet, either wilfully, or as ſome have done, upon deſign to eſcape the Service of their Country; but the deſign can never be this, to make Men believe that the Maim'd Trunk was the Original Shape; and that the Eyes and Limbs of other Men are Artificial things, and Additions to Nature.

It is not therefore to be wondered that ſome Men have effected, what they labour'd ſo much; and that all the Induſtry and contrivance againſt themſelves, of thoſe that are the ſuppos'd Maſters of Wit, ſhould in ſome meaſure ſucceed. The pleaſures of one outward ſenſe may be ſo violent as to ſuperſede the perceptions of the other; and the Soul ſtrongly

diverted at the Eye, may forget it has an Ear: ſo eaſily, when it is call'd outward at all the ſenſes, may it diſregard the notices of the Inner; and ſuffer the gentle directions Within to be over-pow-er'd by a violence from Abroad. Then the Higher Rational part of Man is brought to ſubmit to the Lower, and our Reaſon is put on the task to prove us Beaſts. There are then other ſuppoſitions made than thoſe we mention, of Chance and Hazard in the Univerſe, and of Ill Nature in Men: the one to be the cauſe of the Beauty and Regularity of the World, and the other the original of human So-ciety. Such ſuppoſitions are then made, not as would ariſe Naturally from our firſt Thoughts, but ſuch as are Neceſſary for abſurd Conſequences; ſuch as were attempted by one of the ſame Authors in other Learning, but did not ſucceed as well; when a Point was to be Big and a Line to be Broad: and thoſe might, it may be, have been granted too, had the deductions been, not concerning the im-pertinence of a ſquar'd Circle, or a doubled Cube; could thoſe rich Conſequences have followed thence, that profit and pleaſure were the chief end of Man; that there was no Controul now, nor Judgment hereafter.

For there is a great advantage deſign'd to be gain'd by the denyal of what we ſuppoſe: they that

that have overcome their Conſcience, triumph as over a ſlain Enemy, and ſeem the only happy, the only free, Men: they are in perfect peace, and full ſecurity; by rejecting this ſingle Principle, they are rid of all their Diſquiets, Regrets, and Fears, they have chas'd away the *Spectrum* that haunted them, the peeviſh *Monitor* that diſturb'd them.

And ſo there may be a deeper quiet about a *Prince* when his Guards are aſleep; but it is but a dream of ſecurity: and a Man is at more eaſe without the Admonitions of his Friend, but in greater danger. All this Gaiety is but as of thoſe who have loſt their Senſes; who ſeem at eaſe, and better than ever, in the flattering *Delirium*, under the heighth of their Diſtemper.

For ſo the outward Senſe of *Feeling* may be dulled and deadned by Art, may be made a Boaſt, and expoſed for a Show; ſuch are capable of no Pain, and have not the afflicting Impreſſions that others ſuffer: but this Pain was deſign'd for their Uſe, and they are made ſenſible of Hurt, that they may avoid it, who otherwiſe might heedleſly ſuffer their Limbs to be lopp'd off, or their Life to be taken away.

In the ſame manner may Men boaſt they are without Pain within; but it is but an ill condition: they are without the ſenſe that ſhould grieve

them when they do ill, and feel not the ſatisfaction of thoſe that do well; without it they cannot live to the Advantages of the preſent Life, nor ever arrive at that to come.

But prudent Men will act according to the intention of their Creator; and think it moſt fit for a Rational Being to purſue the deſign of the Allwiſe: they will, as much as they can, quicken this inward ſence, improve this diſcerning Power of the Mind, and encourage its Reflections; careful to maintain and keep up the Conſcience, tender of its ſight as of the Apple of their Eye.

To this neceſſary purpoſe are all Holy Times; ſo many pauſes interpos'd, and ſtops made in our lives, that we may ſtand ſtill, conſider, and look back; a quiet from abroad, to hearken within; to hear what God ſpeaks, not only in his loud, but in his ſtill voice. To this purpoſe we come, as now, to the Word of God; to have the Law on our Hearts, refreſh'd by that of the Holy Book; to have the fleſhly Tables, injur'd in *Adam*, and in us, (as thoſe firſt of ſtone were broke in *Moſes* his hand) ſupplied again, if poſſible, and corrected by this Authentick Copy; to have our domeſtick Monitor check'd, it may be, at home, encouraged and aſſiſted by the Publick; to hear the ſame Reflections made, Directions and Reproofs

proofs ſeconded, by thoſe that ſpeak in our Maker's Name.

Thus far for the *firſt Suppoſition*, That *there is in Mankind a Sence of Good and Ill, Natural Notices of our Duty*, which may be ſuppreſs'd, but ought to be cheriſhed and promoted.

The *Other Suppoſition* of the Text is harder to be imagin'd, though it will be granted more eaſily: That *Men may act contrary to what they know*, and perſiſt in that which they condemn. For it may not be difficult to conceive, how a Rational Creature ſhould underſtand its Duty, and be ſenſible of the deſign of its Frame: but hardly to be thought, he ſhould oppoſe his Judgments by his Actions, and conſent to what he diſallows.

And yet this Real Contradiction, between our *Will* and our *Reaſon*, a ſeeming Contradiction in Nature, is too well atteſted by *Practice*, and underſtood by each of us: it needs no *Demonſtration*, is the *Hypotheſis* of our *Nature*, and to be confeſſed by all the Sons of *Adam*. For it is the Caſe of all Mankind that St. *Paul* expreſſes; *that which I do, I allow not; but what I hate that do I.* Upon the ſight of which deſperate profligate Condition, He well cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of ſin?* Who ſhall deliver me from this inconceivable myſtery of Iniquity, this

this fatal perplex'd Abſurdity? How ſhall I be reconcil'd to my ſelf? But who will reconcile me to my Maker? *For if my heart condemn me, God is greater than my heart.*

For as there was certainly an Intention and Deſign in the Parts of my Body, and their Functions; ſo in theſe Perceptions and Inclinations of my Mind: and if we *Act* not according to this our Creator's *firſt Intention*, what other he may have for us we may juſtly fear; we tranſgreſſing by the arbitrary Pleaſure of our own Will, and obnoxious therefore to the Juſtice of His. Thoſe Notions were imprinted in us by ſome ſuperiour Cauſe, and will not an Account be taken of them by the ſame hand? So does the Sence of this Law preſcrib'd, ſuppoſe a Law-giver; and the Conſcience of our Trangreſſions, infer a Judge. But becauſe infinite other Conſiderations would direct us to the Being of God, I ſhall therefore only follow theſe, as they lead us Priſoners to his Judgement-ſeat, and as the Apoſtle has made the Chain; *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.*

For *if our hearts have condemned us*, the Sentence is not a groundleſs trifling Thought; It is the voice of our Conſtitution, and was ſuggeſted by our Maker;

Maker ; It carries his Authority along with it, and proceeds from an Oracle in the breaſt of each Man, as ſacred as that on the Breaſt-plate of *Aaron*. *If our hearts have condemn'd us*, this hath been only a Preparatory Hearing, nor can it be pleaded in bar to another Tryal. We may ſlight the Sentence, think to Revoke, or endeavour to Eraſe it : but the Record will be remov'd, and the Cauſe taken out of our hands; brought finally before a Judge, Omniſcient, moſt Holy, and Omnipotent, from whoſe ſight we can't be Hid, in whoſe Eye we can't be Innocent, and to whoſe Power we muſt ſubmit. *For God is greater than our hearts.*

God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things, adds the Apoſtle : as if that Attribute alone were Great enough to confound the Sinners Preſumption.

From Men we may conceal the Sentence, and paſs for Innocent; the judgment not to be read on the Forehead, and more gaiety it may be on the Face of the Self-condemn'd: but the great God was not a ſtranger to the whole procedure, he ſaw the fact committed, knew the particular Circumſtances of the Crime, and Articles of the Law, and was preſent at the whole Conviction ; the guilty Perſon is ſtill in his Eye, and his Juſtice knows how to find him.

He

He is therefore repreſented to laugh from above, at the folly of thoſe that would abſcond from Him; that think they are hid, when Man does not ſee. He ſees the vain diſingenuity of thoſe that argue againſt their Sence, and deny what they Know: their ſolitary private thoughts are before him, what they own to Themſelves, and forebode when they are Alone. He ſees too the Arts that have been us'd to ſtifle the Evidence, and corrupt the Judge; the Practices to Alter the natural direction, and to defeat the Original Intention; how much we have indeavour'd to change our Conſtitution, and to new Make our ſelves, becauſe we would diſown our Creator. He was conſcious to the Remonſtrances, we would not hear, and to the good thoughts, we were able to ſuppreſs; he took notice, when we would take none. The ſenſe of good and ill might be taken away, but the nature of it was not: that Immoveable boundary ſtood faſt, as the great Depth, as the Everlaſting Mountains. Our Minds might be depriv'd of their natural light; but *God was greater than our hearts*, and his knowledge could not be impair'd: as Man may ſhut his Eyes, but that puts not out the Sun.

Knew our God, knew Man of us, but as much as we do our ſelves; we ſhould call for the *Rocks*

to

to cover us, and *for the Mountains* to ſhelter us. But, what we have obſerv'd, is but a part of that which lies open to the All-ſeeing Eye: in the light of his Countenance are our ſecret Sins, ſuch as our underſtanding never mark'd, or our Memory has let go. He is *greater than our hearts*, the *ſearcher of them*; He knows how negligently they have watched over our actions, and how little they have improv'd their firſt notices: our very Conſcience, though eſteem'd by us too ſcrupulous, will be accus'd of its defaults; our Judge will be condemn'd; and where then ſhall we appear?

Eſpecially when we conſider not only the knowledge, but

Secondly, The Juſtice and Holineſs of our Maker. For though we may have complain'd of the Rigor of our Conſcience, as if the Judge in our Breaſt were inexorable, and we had better appeal to a Stranger; yet we muſt have been favour'd ſtill, and we have all the while been judges in our Cauſe: if we are condemn'd, it is with reluctancy; and the Sentence can't but be indulgent. But that we expect from God, cannot but be juſt: ſhall he accept our Perſon? or the Judge of all the Earth fail to do right, for our ſakes? As if when he ſaw a Thief, then he conſented with him; and would be partaker with the Adulterers.

If our own Hearts have not been able to bear with our Iniquities; have been offended, and griev'd, and complain'd under their intolerable burthen; if our Eclips'd darkned reaſon could not but diſcern the Guilt, and Duſt and Aſhes abhor the Impurity; if ſometimes we have been provok'd even to hate our ſelves: how muſt we appear in the ſight of Him, to whom the Heavens are not pure, nor the Angels without ſpot; the bleſſed Holy Being, the moſt Oppoſite to what is Irregular, and Impatient of what is Unclean? With what diſpleaſure and Averſation muſt he have view'd us? and what doom are we to expect? No Pain certainly can be more contrary hereafter to Human Nature, than our Wickedneſs has been to the Divine?

If it is irkſome to the diſpoſition of our Nature, to be ill directed; and painful to our make, to be diſtorted, and put out of its firſt Order; how will the Author and Creator endure the perverſe Change, this defacing his Workmanſhip, and oppoſing his Pleaſure? Will he not, think we, ſtand by his Laws, and juſtify his Intention? and how then (in the laſt place) ſhall we eſcape his Power, or abide his Indignation?

Little have ſome been able to endure the Regrets of their own thoughts, and what would they have

have given to have been deliver'd from themſelves? Under the judgment of their hearts, they have appear'd indeed as condemn'd Men; and their own evil Spirit has ſufficiently tormented them: ſo ſenſible were they of what they had deſerv'd, that none but their God could afflict them more; but his terrors were *Greater* ſtill, and they felt not yet his Almighty Arm.

Some indeed ſcape better here; they have the Addreſs to Over-rule the Sentence of their hearts, or divert the Execution; find other entertainment for their thoughts, and by new guilt deliver themſelves from the paſt; call in Company for their help againſt themſelves, to reſcue, or to intercede; will not be at leiſure to hear, nor ſuffer the Soul to ſpeak; drown the Voice of Nature with a noiſe of Muſick, and its fears in Wine.

But theſe are but methods to practiſe upon themſelves; Arts that can ſucceed only on our own weak Minds; *God is Greater*: that Judge is not in our power, nor to be diverted by ſuch Amuſements. The Sentence therefore aggravated by theſe unprofitable criminal Delays, will at laſt be pronounc'd, and as certainly executed: whiſper'd before, but then ſpoke out, by the glorious God that maketh the Thunder; by the God, that ſpeaks

to the Dead, and they hearken, to the old Criminals of Ages paſt, and they riſe up and appear. Then our Maker muſt be own'd, when He has twice form'd us; muſt be confeſs'd, at leaſt by Torture. Then the Difference of Good and Ill, will be ſenſibly felt; the wide difference plainly diſcern'd; wide, as the great Gulph betwixt Heaven and Hell.

Let us therefore now begin to conſider, and timely enter upon the neceſſary Review: let us examine our ſelves for the Reflections we have neglected, and for thoſe we have been able to prevent: let us recover the Notices we have ſtifled, and reſtore the Judicature to GOD within us. Let us judge our ſelves, that we be not judged; and prevent the Condemnation to come. Let our Apprehenſions of GOD be as *Great* as His Majeſty; and let us think of reconciling our ſelves to a Power we muſt obey.

For *if our hearts condemn us*, and we perſiſt to offend; where is our Hope? Or who is it that ſhall give the Pardon? Will *GOD* be leſs Holy than our ſelves, and our Sins leſs diſagreeable to Him? Or will His Judgment want of the Righteouſneſs of ours? And is Iniquity like to find favour there? To practiſe, what we cannot but condemn,

demn, is the higheſt diſingenuity: but to expect that what we can't but condemn, ſhould not be condemned by GOD, is a *Blaſphemous Preſumption.*

And if, in the Courſe of a vicious Life, *our hearts condemn us not*; (a Suppoſition St. *John* would not make): we have then more yet to dread, leſt we ſhould have been already condemn'd by the Almighty, and given up to this reprobate Mind; leſt our Conſciences, ſear'd ſo as with a hot Iron, ſhould have been branded by a Judicial Sentence from above. Our Caſe is deſperate indeed, abandon'd by our ſelves, and given over by our Maker. We hear no more of the Inferiour Judge deputed to ſit in our hearts, to enquire and to determine: but we ſhall not ſo eſcape, he is aſſaulted and ſlain by our Treaſon; a Treaſon added to our other Crimes, committed againſt the Sovereign, the proper Conuſance of the Great and Terrible Day.

But if, when *our hearts have condemned us*, we repent and amend; are griev'd for what we cannot recall; and reſolv'd hereafter to obey the Directions of our Reaſon: Our future good Deeds cannot indeed blot out the committed Ill; nor our Hearts pardon us, and reverſe the Sentence it has juſtly paſs'd: but, to our Comfort, *God is greater*;

He

He can pardon our Faults, and will do away our fences; by Him we are reſtor'd as at the beginning, and it is the part then of *Satan*, not of our *Hearts*, to accuſe us. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect*, is the Challenge then of St. *Paul? It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth?*

And then when a *New Life* ſhall have proceeded from this Beginning; a *Life* clear of *Unjuſtice*, *Intemperance*, *Profaneneſs*; Actions always unnatural to Man, but at laſt his ſureſt Averſion, and moſt dreaded Horrour: when *Temperance* in our ſelves, *Charity* to Men, *Services* and *Duty* to our GOD, ſhall have traced out a fair and happy way to Heaven; a courſe, upon the Reflection, the moſt delightful and agreeable ſight to a Humane Mind: when at the Even of our Days we ſhall come to review our Actions, and ſee, with a ſatisfaction like to that of our Creatour, That all is Good: with Him we ſhall enter into a *Sabbath* too; and on our Deathbeds be in a State of Reſt and unſpeakable Joy, greater than Voluptuouſneſs, Honour and Riches ever afforded the ungodly Offender; the ſame Inſtinct that prompted us before to our Duty, aſſuring us now of a Reward; and adding, to the pleaſing View of the paſt time, the glorious Proſpect

ſpect of an infinitely happy Eternity to come. With thoſe then who have ſo liv'd, like the Creatures of GOD, and according to the Truth of their Humane Nature; He will likewiſe deal according to the infinite Goodneſs and Kindneſs of his own; acknowledging them for His, whom He finds after his Image, and advancing them to a greater Likeneſs, and nearer Approach: *Well done, thou Good, thou Faithful and Obedient Creature, enter thou into the Joy of thy Maker.*

Thither may He pleaſe to bring us all by the Merits of His Son, and the Aſſiſtance of His Spirit: And to Them in their Trinity, &c.

FINIS.